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DAWN

# PTI denounces 'violence' against Adiala sit-in

• Aleema claims PTI lawmakers, sister 'tortured' by police; party to observe 'black day' tomorrow
• Punjab opposition to move privilege motion against prison officials for denying meeting with Imran

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: A day after the police allegedly used violence against the PTI supporters, including Imran Khan's family members, to disperse a sit-in outside the Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, the party leadership denounced the authorities for their "utterly intolerable and completely unacceptable" move.

The police action had come in response to a sit-in outside the prison, which was staged by Mr Khan's sisters as well as other party leaders, after the jail administration did not allow them to meet the incarcerated party chief despite court permission.

On Wednesday, PTI leaders held a press conference alongside Mr Khan's sisters Aleema, Uzma, and Noreen, denouncing the Punjab government's high-handedness and announcing to observe a 'black day' on Friday (tomorrow).

During the presser, PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja said it was the undeniable constitutional right of Mr Khan's sisters to meet their brother.

Aleema Khan denounced the reported assault on her sister and others by the police. She alleged that a female officer directed male personnel to beat up the protesters. "Yesterday, our people, including MPAs and MNAs, were subjected to violence," she said.

She said that police threw 71-year-old Noreen Niazi to the ground and dragged her, besides torturing other women participants and locking them up in vans with male detainees.

"Do you think that by beating us you can silence us? We will return, and you cannot intimidate us," she vowed.

Aleema Khan affirmed that the ex-PM's family would continue to stand outside the jail for him, exposing oppressors and injustice.

PTI central information secretary Sheikh Waqqas Akram also condemned the treatment meted out to Imran's sisters. He vowed that they would continue to strive for constitutional supremacy and judicial independence.

Noreen Niazi vowed that the nation would not forget the tragedies of May 9 and November 26.

Ms Niazi noted that her son remained imprisoned, yet the oppression outside jail was even more frightening. Recounting her ordeal, she said, "I still do not know where they took the woman who grabbed me. She pulled me by my hair, threw me to the ground, and dragged me across the road."

Uzma Khan expressed concerns over the condition of PTI's founder, stating that he had been in solitary confinement for the past two weeks. "Yesterday, we simply requested permission to see him to ensure his well-being," she said.

Ms Khan added that the PTI founder has urged the nation to prepare, declaring that the time has come to choose between freedom and death. "I believe that moment has now arrived," she stated.

**PA privilege motion**

On the other hand, Punjab Assembly Opposition Leader Moeen Riaz Qureshi announced submitting a privilege motion against the Adiala jail officers' obstinacy in denying him and other party leaders from meeting party founder Imran Khan over the past two months.

Speaking at a news conference at the Lahore Press Club on Wednesday, flanked by party MPAs, Mr Qureshi said they staged a protest against the Adiala jail officers, but the police used force to disperse them.

Mr Qureshi said even Mr Khan's sisters were being denied meeting with their imprisoned brother for the last two months.

*Mansoor Malik in Lahore also contributed to this report*

# Shehbaz, Murad discuss political situation after 27th Amendment

PM says return of international cricket reflects Pakistan's stability; reiterates commitment to minority rights

PM Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah attend a ceremony held in honour of visiting cricket teams.—PPI

ISLAMABAD: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday to discuss the overall political situation and provincial affairs, the PM Office said in a statement.

No further details of the meeting were shared by the PM Office.

The meeting came days after the enactment of the 27th Amendment, a piece of legislation that has triggered debate within legal and political circles, prompted two Supreme Court judges to resign and necessitated major restructuring within key judicial bodies.

Separately, PM Shehbaz said that Pakistan's continued hosting of international cricket events was "evidence of the country's positive image, peace and stability".

He was speaking at a luncheon hosted at the PM House in honour of the Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe cricket teams participating in a tri-nation series.

The prime minister said the passion, skill and dedication demonstrated by the three sides were commendable and that the players were representing their countries in an exemplary manner. He urged them to continue displaying sportsmanship and mutual respect, setting "a guiding example for the younger generation".

The premier also praised Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, under whose leadership, he said, the PCB was successfully conducting all matches of the series with "excellent arrangements, effective strategy and high professional standards". The ongoing series, he added, was providing cricket fans with "top-quality cricket".

Later, addressing a ceremony held in connection with the International Day for Tolerance, the prime minister urged the nation to "give respect to each other" and reaffirm its commitment to protecting minority rights.

"Let us make a promise that we will give all minorities equal rights and respect," he said, recalling that Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had envisioned Pakistan as a country where "everyone enjoyed their rights on the basis of equality". —Syed Irfan Raza

# NDMA warns of even stronger monsoon next year

PM directs early preparedness to mitigate impact

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has warned that the country is likely to experience 22-26 per cent above-normal rainfall during the 2026 monsoon season, stressing that weather extremes are intensifying and urgent preparations are required to minimise potential losses.

Speaking to the media alongside Minister for Climate Change Dr Musadiq Malik on Wednesday, NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik revealed that 3.1 million people had been relocated to safe areas during this year's monsoon.

He emphasised that both federal and provincial governments carry significant responsibilities in disaster management, noting that recommendations have already been prepared for regulating river flows.

He said tourism activities would remain restricted during the months of June and July to prevent losses. He highlighted the role of the early warning system, under which provinces are alerted six to eight months in advance. He added that timely weekly alerts would enable the provincial authorities to adopt more effective precautionary measures.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the authorities concerned to begin early preparations to mitigate the impacts of climate change and prevent any loss of life or property during next year's monsoon season, and ordered immediate implementation of the short-term plan presented by the Ministry of Climate Change.

While chairing a meeting to review measures to prevent monsoon-related damages, the PM approved the ministry's short-term plan and stressed its urgent execution.

He asked the ministries of climate change and planning, and NDMA to work in close coordination with the provincial governments for integrated planning on climate change. He also called for preparations to convene a meeting of the National Water Council to carry out national-level planning. —APP/Dawn Report

# ROs not to blame for independents' dilemma: SC judge

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, observed that returning officers (ROs) correctly prepared lists of 41 independent candidates during the 2024 general elections, adding that PTI's decision-makers were to blame for compelling them to contest in such a manner.

In his additional note in the reserved seats review case, Justice Mandokhail offered a detailed explanation for why he partially disagreed with the Constitutional Bench's (CB) decision of June 27, which overturned a previous ruling that granted reserved seats to the PTI.

The detailed note, which was uploaded on the SC website this week, concerns the status of the 41 candidates whose classification as "independent" became a contentious legal issue.

While maintaining his earlier position that PTI was entitled to 39 reserved seats, Justice Mandokhail upheld the CB's view regarding 41 other candidates.

According to the record, these 41 individuals submitted nomination papers by Dec 24, 2023 explicitly declaring themselves independent candidates, which occurred before the January 2024 SC verdict that stripped PTI of its 'cricket bat' symbol. Because of this timeline, he argued, PTI's claim that "peculiar circumstances" forced these candidates to file independently was not supported by evidence.

Justice Mandokhail cited PTI's own lawyer, Salman Akram Raja, who acknowledged that the party leadership purposely directed these individuals to file independently to avoid "unwarranted situations".

If this explanation were accepted, he asked, then why did 39 other candidates file as PTI-affiliated, despite facing the same circumstances? This internal inconsistency further convinced him that the 41 candidates' independent declarations were deliberate rather than compelled by the later Supreme Court symbol verdict, he wrote.—Staff Reporter

# 18-strong AJK cabinet sworn in, two made advisers

By Tariq Naqash

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK PM Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore on Wednesday inducted 18 ministers into his cabinet and appointed two unelected sons of sitting lawmakers as advisers to the government.

The oath was administered at Aiwan-i-Sadr by AJK Legislative Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, who is serving as acting president due to the illness of AJK President Barrister Sultan Mahmood.

A large number of PPP workers and supporters, as well as several senior civil servants, attended the ceremony, which was also attended by PM Rathore and former prime ministers Sardar Tanveer Ilyas and Haji Yaqoob Khan. However, PPP regional president Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin was conspicuous by his absence.

ACTING AJK president Chaudhry Latif Akbar swears in the 18-member cabinet.—Photo by the writer

The newly inducted ministers were Mian Abdul Waheed, Sardar Javed Ayoub, Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi, Javed Iqbal Budhanvi, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Amar Yasin, Sardar Ziaul Qamar, Nabila Ayoub, Deevan Ali Chughtai, Malik Zafar Iqbal, Chaudhry Arshad, Chaudhry Muhammad Rasheed, Yasir Sultan, Sardar Muhammad Hussain, Chaudhry Akhlaq, Faheem Akhtar Rabbani, Rafique Nayyar and Ali Shan Soni.

Of them, the first eight were elected on PPP tickets in 2021, while the remainder had contested the polls on PTI tickets. Except for Mr Nayyar and Mr Soni, the PTI members had defected from their party in April 2023 and joined the PTI's 'forward bloc' led by then-premier Chaudhry Anwarul Haq.

When the political winds began to shift once again in AJK, all of them switched over to the PPP.

While it was the second oath-taking for the PPP's old guard as cabinet members in the sitting Assembly, seven of their new colleagues took oath for the fourth time and three for the third time.

Although the AJK Constitution does not impose a limit on the size of the cabinet — after the relevant clause was abolished in June 2023 — the government kept the cabinet relatively small in line with its commitment to the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), the civil society alliance spearheading a rights movement in the region.

Nabila Ayoub, elected on a reserved seat, was the only woman inducted into the cabinet.

Under another understanding with the JAAC, PM Rathore did not include any MLA elected from the refugee constituencies in the cabinet.

The portfolios of the ministers were not immediately announced. However, shortly after the oath-taking, the prime minister designated PPP lawmaker Waheed as the 'most senior minister'.

Apart from the ministers, the prime minister also appointed Sardar Ahmad Saghir and Sardar Fahad Yaqoob as advisers to the government.

Mr Saghir is the son of Shahida Saghir, a directly elected MLA from Poonch who has recently joined the PPP, while Mr Yaqoob is the son of Haji Yaqoob Khan.